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ABSTRACT

The position involves providing care for mammals, reptiles, birds, and fish. It is necessary to be familiar with the animals' characteristics, needs, and behavior and possess skill in observing, handling, and controlling them. Different aspects of the WG-4 and WG-5 animal caretaker's position are cited under the categories of general description, skill and knowledge, responsibility, physical effort, and working conditions. (AG)

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JOB GRADING STANDARD FOR

ANIMAL CARETAKER
WG-7706

CE 000 337

U.S. CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
BUREAU OF POLICIES AND STANDARDS

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WORK COVERED

This standard covers nonsupervisory work which involves providing care for mammals, reptiles, birds, and fish. This work requires knowledge of the animals' characteristics, needs, and behavior, and skill in observing, handling, and controlling them.

A regular part of caring for animals involves cleaning animal areas. When such work is done full-time or as a primary assignment, the job should be graded by reference to other standards in the Manual Labor Family, WG–3500.

WORK NOT COVERED

This standard does not apply to work involved in:

—Gathering data in support of professional studies of animals or performing work requiring technical skills such as taking blood samples, giving injections, performing autopsy techniques, and similar work requiring technical knowledge of animal disease, anatomy, or scientific experiments and procedures. (See Note To Users.)

TITLES

Jobs graded by this standard are to be titled *Animal Caretaker*.

GRADE LEVELS

This standard does not describe all possible grade levels for this occupation. If jobs differ substantially from the level of skill, knowledge, and other work requirements described at the levels in this standard, they may be graded above or below those described based on the application of sound job grading methods.

NOTE TO USERS

There may be a question whether the work performed in some jobs is Wage Grade or General Schedule, and whether such jobs are

subject to grading under the Federal Wage System or classification under title 5, U.S. Code. Guidance for making decisions in these cases is provided in Section IV, General Introduction, Background, and Instructions, of the *Position Classification Standards*, and appropriate GS standards; e.g., Biological Technician Series, GS–404.

JOB GRADE LEVEL

WG–7706–4 **Animal Caretaker WG–4** WG–7706–4

General: The WG–4 Animal Caretaker provides the basic needs for a group of animals of the same or different species. Typically, this level includes such work as:

—Observing animals for obvious changes of appearance and activity;

—Providing standard feeds and liquids;

—Catching and handling docile but agile animals;

—Maintaining control of animals.

The WG–4 Animal Caretaker performs the work according to specific schedules and routine methods with little review during progress. He reports unusual appearance or activity that he observes to the supervisor or higher grade employee. The work at this level is checked to see that instructions and work schedules have been followed.

Skill and Knowledge: The WG–4 Animal Caretaker applies knowledge of the normal appearance and activities of animals to recognize obvious changes such as excessive loss of fur or feathers, pregnancy, fighting, or refusal to feed. He has knowledge of the normal feed and liquid needs of animals and provides standard types and amounts such as equal portions or a continuous supply of pellets and water. Typically, the WG–4 Animal Caretaker is skillful in catching and handling docile but agile animals with his hands or nets and applies this skill to hold and transfer them without injuring the animals or endangering himself. For example, he catches fish with a net or caged rats with his hands and transfers them between cages or holding tanks without bruising the animals or getting bitten or scratched. The WG–4 Animal Caretaker is able to identify animals by tattoos, tags, or natural markings such as color or color combinations, and separates or places them together by such criteria as strains, sex, age, and size.

Responsibility: The WG–4 Animal Caretaker provides care for an assigned group of animals according to specific schedules and routine methods. He makes judgments of the animals' appearance and activities and reports obvious changes to the supervisor or higher grade worker. He determines which animals can be placed

together and which ones must be separated. For example, he decides when to separate newborn animals from parents, mature males from each other, or males from females to protect young or small animals or to prevent fighting, unwanted breeding, or competition for feed and territory. When breeding animals, the WG–4 Animal Caretaker typically determines the sex and maturity of the animals and places the male and female in the same cage or area together. The work at this level is checked to see that specific work schedules and instructions have been followed and to insure that the animals' basic needs and welfare are provided for.

Physical Effort: WG–4 work often requires lifting and carrying feed materials weighing up to 75 pounds and frequently handling such items as feed trays weighing up to 20 pounds. The WG–4 Animal Caretaker walks or stands for extended periods and frequently works in a bent position. Often, light physical effort is required to lift or handle docile animals.

Working Conditions: Work at this level is performed inside and outside. Inside work often exposes the WG–4 Animal Caretaker to unpleasant odors and noises. Outside work exposes him to hot sun and occasionally bad weather. Under both conditions, the WG–4 Animal Caretaker usually works on concrete floors and is exposed to bites, scratches, and animal wastes. He may also be exposed to contagious diseases.

General: In comparison with the WG–4 Animal Caretaker who provides routine care for animals, the WG–5 Animal Caretaker decides the care required or he follows special instructions. This level requires more knowledge of the animals cared for, more skill in observing and handling them, and typically includes such work as:

—Observing the animals' appearance and activity for obvious signs of illness, disease, discontent, and their general physical condition;

—Determining the type and amount of feed animals receive;

—Handling and restraining hard to control animals;

—Performing such work as shearing, force feeding, applying medications, or taking fish eggs;

—Overseeing breeding or reproduction of animals according to their physical traits or to produce given numbers of animals.

The WG–5 Animal Caretaker provides care for a group of animals of the same or different species. He performs the work according to established methods or follows special instructions. He reports observed signs of illness, disease, injury, or unusual activity to the supervisor or specialist. The work at this level is checked for adherence to general animal care procedures and to see that special instructions are followed.

Skill and Knowledge: In addition to applying knowledge of the normal appearance and activities of animals to recognize obvious changes as does the WG–4 Animal Caretaker, the WG–5 Animal Caretaker knows and recognizes the observable signs of illness, common diseases, discontent, or the general physical condition of animals. For example, the WG–5 Animal Caretaker uses his knowledge of the appearance of the pelts of healthy animals to recognize discolored or rough fur or skin as a sign of internal parasites or improper diet. He is familiar with the animals' normal exercise habits and movements and uses this knowledge to recognize reduced activity or uncoordinated movements. In addition to knowing the normal feed and liquid requirements of animals as does the WG–4 Animal Caretaker, the WG–5 Animal Caretaker is familiar with special feed requirements, different types of feed and feed supple-

ments, and applies his knowledge to increase and decrease the amounts of feed for over or underweight animals or to change diets for young, pregnant, or nursing animals.

In comparison with the WG–4 Animal Caretaker, the WG–5 Animal Caretaker applies more knowledge of the temperament of individual animals and more skill to handle them or to perform such work as shearing, force feeding, or taking fish eggs. For example, when catching and handling dogs, the WG–5 Animal Caretaker instills confidence in them by his approach and by firmly but gently restraining them for such purposes as the taking of blood samples or giving injections by technical or professional employees. When overseeing reproduction of animals, the WG–5 Animal Caretaker typically applies more knowledge of animal characteristics than the WG–4 Animal Caretaker. For example, when selecting mates and scheduling breeding, he considers such factors as their appearance, general physical condition, the time and results of previous matings, and the average number of offspring.

Responsibility: In comparison with the WG–4 Animal Caretaker who performs the work according to specific schedules and routine methods, the WG–5 Animal Caretaker decides the care required according to the individual needs and circumstances of animals or he follows special instructions pertaining to the animals. For example, he considers such factors as age, sex, and their general physical condition when determining such things as the amount and type of nesting materials that are required or when to dehorn, shear, or groom them. He follows specific instructions from the supervisor or specialist when performing such work as giving medicines, feeding specific diets, or following special sanitary procedures.

Physical Effort: In addition to the physical effort required at the WG–4 level, the WG–5 Animal Caretaker may use greater strength or agility to capture and restrain stronger or more active animals.

Working Conditions: In addition to the working conditions at the WG–4 level, WG–5 level work may require contact with unpredictable or ill-natured animals which exposes the WG–5 Animal Caretaker to greater possibility of injury from bites, scratches, and kicks.

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